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ETHIOPIAN FOREIGN POLICY IN THE HORN OF AFRICA: INFORMAL RELATIONS WITH SOMALILAND AND THEIR POSSIBLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

ABSTRACT

The paper deals with the foreign policy of Ethiopia toward Somalia and issues connected to the informal relations with Somaliland and its possible international recognition in particular. Somaliland is *de facto* state which declared its independence unilaterally as a response to the outbreak of the Somali civil war in 1991. Even though it managed to promote peace and stability in its territory, it has not been recognized by any state of international community yet. However, it has developed strategic partnerships and relations with European and African countries. The most important ally or partner of Somaliland in the Horn of Africa is Ethiopia. It cooperates with Somaliland in the field of economy, politics and security. However, due to certain political and geopolitical factors, Ethiopia is not willing to recognize Somaliland *de iure* and is dedicated to the idea of united Somalia. Therefore, the strategies Ethiopia uses when dealing with this *de facto* state and also the geopolitical factors why Ethiopia is still not willing to recognize Somaliland *de jure* will be analysed in this paper. The possibilities of future development of Ethiopia-Somaliland relations will be evaluated considering geopolitical and political factors.

Keywords: Somaliland, *de facto* states, Horn of Africa, Ethiopia

INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE OF *DE FACTO* STATES

The era after the Second World War, and especially after the Cold War, was marked by the emergence of new territorial units within the existing international system, the so-called *quasi states*. These *quasi states* may refer both to failed states and *de facto* states, depending on the perception of this term by a particular author. According to Robert Jackson¹, *quasi states* are those state entities which are internationally recognized, yet they are not able to provide basic services for their citizens and therefore, they lack internal sovereignty. *Quasi states* without internal sovereignty are those which may be qualified in the taxonomy of statehood as weak, failing, failed and collapsed.² According to the definition of Robert Rotberg, a collapsed state “is a rare and extreme version of a failed state. Political goods are obtained through private or ad hoc means. Security is equated with the rule of the strong. A collapsed state exhibits a vacuum of authority. It is a mere geographical expression, a black hole into which a failed polity has fallen.”³ The classical example of a collapsed state is Somalia in 1990s and at the beginning of the new millennium, when the State was convulsed by the civil war, fought by individual clan factions and there was no effective government which would be legitimate in the eyes of both Somali and international society.

The term *quasi states* has been used by other authors in connection to entities, which are able to provide basic services to their inhabitants, are able to control the territory they claim, nevertheless, they are not able to gain an international recognition. These so-called *de facto* states are, according to definition of Pål Kolstø⁴ those entities which fulfil three basic criteria: (1) their leadership must be in control of (most of) the territory it lays claim to, (2) they must have sought but not achieved international recognition as an independent state, and (3) they have persisted in this state of non-recognition for more than two years. Therefore the term *quasi state* may be used in connection to Somalia in both meanings: it may refer to the *failed state* of Somalia and at the same time it may refer to Somaliland within the meaning of a *de facto state*.

¹ R. H. Jackson, ‘Quasi-states, Dual Regimes, and Neoclassical Theory: International Jurisprudence and the Third World’, *International Organization*, Vol. 41, No. 4 (1987), pp. 519-549, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S0020818300027594>>.

² W. Zartman, *Collapsed States. The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority*, London 1995; R. I. Rotberg, *When States Fail. Causes and Consequences*, Princeton 2004; R. H. Jackson, *Quasi-States. Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, Cambridge 1993 (*Cambridge Studies in International Relations*, 12).

³ R. I. Rotberg, ‘Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators’ in: idem (ed.), *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, Cambridge, Mass. 2003, “Failed States, Collapsed States, Weak States: Causes and Indicators”, in R. Rotberg (ed.), *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, Washington: Brookings Institution Press 2003, pp. 1-25.

⁴ P. Kolstø, ‘The Sustainability and Future of Unrecognized Quasi-States’, *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 43, No. 6 (2006), pp. 725-726, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0022343306068102>>.

Currently, there are six entities in the international system, which are widely considered *de facto* states.⁵ Most of them emerged due to the secessionist movements in southern Caucasus, such as Abkhazia, South Ossetia or Nagorno-Karabakh. Apart from these, there are two *de facto* states in Europe, Pridnestrovian Moldavian Republic, and Northern Cyprus. In Africa, the only contemporary example of a *de facto* state is Somaliland. However, we may observe in history the emergence of *de facto* states such as Biafra and Katanga.

De facto states are entities that fulfil the criteria of empirical statehood defined in the Montevideo Convention of Rights and Duties of States (1933) as: (1) a permanent population; (2) a defined territory; (3) government; and (4) capacity to enter into relations with other States. It indicates that states are defined besides population and territory also by their internal and external sovereignty. Therefore, since *de facto* states have not been able to acquire international recognition due to various reasons, they are those *quasi state* entities which lack external sovereignty. In order to achieve international recognition, *de facto* states use various legitimization strategies, mainly based on historical continuity of statehood, remedial right on secession on the basis of human rights violation or pointing out to the democratization process in particular *de facto* state.⁶ *De facto* states seek international recognition and related external sovereignty since, according to Barry Bartman “for leaders of unrecognized states, international and legal acceptance would surely reinforce the legitimacy which they believe to be the basis of their claims to separate statehood”.⁷ Moreover, gaining international recognition enables *de facto* states to become members of international organizations and develop closer relations in the field of economy and politics with other states of the international community as well as to obtain loans from international financial institutions, material aid and foreign investments. Nevertheless, in the words of Francis Owtram, “the first aim of these unrecognized states is survival – militarily, politically and economically – in the form of promotion trade, investment, or aid. Underlying all this is the search for recognition or engagement.”⁸ These are main reasons why *de facto* states develop mechanisms of foreign policy, even though, in contrast with recognized states their major foreign policy aim is increase their recognition through economic engagement.⁹

Generally speaking, international society deals with *de facto* states in three ways: “actively opposing them through the use of embargoes and sanctions; generally ignoring

⁵ S. Pegg, *International Society and the De Facto State*, Aldershot 1998; P. Kolstø, ‘The Sustainability...’, pp. 723-740.

⁶ T. Hoch, K. Rudincová, ‘Legitimization of Statehood in De Facto States: A Case Study of Somaliland’, *AUC Geographica*, Vol. 50, No. 1 (2015), pp. 37-49, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.14712/23361980.2015.85>>.

⁷ B. Bartmann, ‘Political Realities and Legal Anomalies. Revisiting the Politics of International Recognition’ in T. Bahcheli, B. Bartmann, H. Srebrnik (eds.), *De Facto States. The Quest for Sovereignty*, London–New York 2004, p. 16 (ASAM Series on International Relations).

⁸ F. Owtram, ‘The Foreign Policies of Unrecognized States’ in: N. Caspersen, G. Stansfield (eds.), *Unrecognized States in the International System*, London–New York 2011, p. 136.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

them and having no dealings with them; and coming to some sort of limited acceptance and acknowledgment of their presence”¹⁰. As Hoch states, “the reluctance of recognized states and international organizations to engage in *de facto* states is a result of the long-standing emphasis of the international community on the territorial integrity of the state and results in inviolability of state borders.”¹¹ In the African context, the approach of international organizations towards *de facto* states and possible cases of secessions are limited by ongoing commitment to the inviolability of borders enshrined in the Charter of the Organization of Africa Unity, Resolution 16(1) on Border Disputes between African States adopted in Cairo in 1964 and in Article 4b of the Constitutive Act of the African Union adopted in Lomé in 2000. Therefore, the African Union and member states of this organization are not much willing to get involved with Somaliland and embrace a negative attitude towards the Somaliland case. However, Ethiopia is one of the African states, which developed informal relations with this *de facto* state. Therefore, the main aim of this text is to analyse the approach of Ethiopia towards Somaliland and the geopolitical factors which, on the one hand, help develop informal relations between these two entities, and on the other hand prevent Ethiopia to recognize Somaliland *de jure*.

From the methodological point, this paper is intrinsic case study.¹² It is mainly based on the analysis of newspaper articles as well as official statements and documents of the Government of Somaliland supplemented by the author’s participant observation during her study stays in Ethiopia in 2010, 2011 and 2015. The introductory part of the paper is dedicated to the theoretical framework of the topic, such as the definition of basic terminology of *quasi states*. In the following part, relations between Somaliland and Ethiopia from the historical perspective are analysed. The special attention is devoted to the mutual relations between Somaliland and Ethiopian governmental officials. The subject of Somaliland-Ethiopian relations is analysed in a wider geopolitical framework of Ethiopia’s aspirations to become a leading power in the Horn of Africa region.

RELATIONS BETWEEN SOMALILAND AND ETHIOPIA

Somaliland is a *de facto* state situated in northern Somalia and inhabited mainly by the Isaaq clan with minorities of the Daarood clan families (the Warsangeli and Dulbahante clans) and the Dir clan family (the Gadabuursi and Isse clans). Its territory corresponds to the former British Protectorate Somaliland. In 1960, it gained independence

¹⁰ S. Pegg, *De Facto States in the International System*, Institute of International Relations. The University of British Columbia 1998, Working Paper no. 21, p. 4, at <<http://www.liu.xplorex.com/sites/liu/files/Publications/webwp21.pdf>>, 6 July 2015.

¹¹ T. Hoch, ‘EU Strategy towards Post-Soviet De Facto States’, *Contemporary European Studies*, No. 2 (2011), p. 73.

¹² P. Baxter, S. Jack ‘Qualitative Case Study Methodology: Study Design and Implementation for Novice Researchers’, *The Qualitative Report*, Vol. 13, No. 4 (2008), pp. 544-559.

from Britain and enjoyed five days of independence before it was merged with former UN Trusteeship under the Italian administration and united Somali Republic was established. However, due to the repressive regime of General Siad Barre, the insurgent groups emerged first in northern Somalia, where they began their struggle against the Somali government. The most important of them was the Somali National Movement (SNM), which later became the leading political power in Somaliland. In response to the developments in southern Somalia, where fighting between clan factions emerged after Siad Barre was removed from his position, the representatives of SNM unilaterally declared the independence of Somaliland at the Grand Conference of Northern Nations (*Shirweynaha Beelaha Waqooyi*) in Burco on 18 May 1991.¹³

Ethiopia maintains a good relationship with Somaliland since the declaration of its independence in 1991. Due to the rivalry between Somali and Ethiopian regimes in the 1980s, Ethiopia supported and served as a safe haven for the Somali insurgency groups from northern Somalia, such as SNM. Moreover, during the Barre's reprisals against northern Somalia at the beginning of the Somali civil war between 1988 and 1991, which resulted *inter alia* in the bombardment of Hargeysa, Ethiopia served also as a target country for migrants from northern Somalia.¹⁴

In order to gain international recognition, Somaliland is trying to establish relations with the states and international organizations through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and unofficial embassies in many countries of the world. These offices issue visas, promote trade and foreign investments and also seek international recognition. However, they are not recognized as official embassies under the Vienna Declaration on Diplomatic Conventions.¹⁵ Even though Somaliland still has not been recognized *de jure* by any member of the international society, it was recognized as a *de facto* state by Djibouti in 1997 for the first time. Ethiopia was the first country which officially referred to Somaliland as a sovereign state and her President as a Head of State during the 9th African Union summit in Accra, Ghana held between 25 and 29 June 2007.¹⁶

Somaliland's diplomatic mission was established in Addis Ababa and vice versa, Ethiopia was the first country to establish its diplomatic mission in Hargeysa. It was first set up as a quasi-embassy and in 2006 upgraded to Consular General. It serves not only for consular purposes but engages itself in vast areas of political and economic affairs. Besides Addis Ababa, Somaliland has its informal diplomatic missions in Great Britain, United States, Sweden, Kenya, France, Norway, Belgium, Djibouti, South

¹³ A. Huliaras, 'The Viability of Somaliland: Internal Constraints and Regional Geopolitics', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 2 (2002), p. 160, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0258900022000005151>>.

¹⁴ M.A. Duale, S.M. Ahmed, 'Re-examining Somaliland's Relations with Neighboring States', *Pambazuka News*, No. 679 (2014), at <<http://www.pambazuka.net/en/category.php/comment/91837>>, 2 July 2015.

¹⁵ F. Owtram, 'The Foreign Policies...', p. 137.

¹⁶ 'The Recognition of Somaliland. Growing International Engagement and Backing', Government of Somaliland, at <<http://recognition.somalilandgov.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/The-recognition-of-Somaliland-Growing-international-engagement-and-backing.pdf>>, 30 June 2015.

Sudan and Canada.¹⁷ Besides that, Somaliland passports are acknowledged by South Korea, Kenya, Djibouti and Ethiopia.¹⁸ Moreover, also Turkey starts to deepen its relations with Somaliland which may be illustrated by the fact that on 23 November 2013 the Turkish ambassador expressed the intention to open a Turkish consular office in Hargeysa.¹⁹

Moreover, Somaliland receives delegations from abroad and its representatives have attended the ministerial meeting held in the World Bank. Also, top officials of Somaliland travel regularly on official visits to foreign countries. For example, in 2000, the Somaliland delegation led by President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal accompanied by eight ministers visited Ethiopia at the invitation of Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi and signed agreements on trade and communications development with the Ethiopian government. The visit was motivated mainly by economic reasons, since the Somaliland delegation offered to its Ethiopian counterparts the use of the Berbera port for Ethiopian export and import and for oil storage as well.²⁰ In 2006 president Daahir Ryaale Kaahin undertook a broader tour of East Africa with stops in Tanzania, Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Zambia.²¹ In a similar way, the Ethiopian delegations visited Somaliland several times. For example, in April 2001, a delegation led by deputy foreign minister held talks with Somaliland President Mohamed Haji Ibrahim Egal on trade and bilateral relations and possibilities of opening an Ethiopian trade bank branch in Hargeysa.²²

Recently, a high-level Ethiopian delegation, comprised of ministers, deputy ministers, and other senior governmental officers visited Somaliland in November 2014. The Ethiopian delegation discussed with its Somaliland counterparts trade, investments and infrastructure cooperation and possibilities of their future deepening. Discussions were concluded by the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding between Somaliland and Ethiopia and the establishment of the fourteen-member joint "Ministerial Commission". The Ethiopian delegation appreciated the positive development in Somaliland especially in the field of security. The President of Somaliland Ahmed Mohamed Mahmud Silanyo declared during a state dinner that "*Ethiopia has been and will*

¹⁷ The Contacts and Addresses of the Somaliland Representative Offices around the World, Government of Somaliland, 2014, at <<http://somalilandgov.com/country-profile/embasies/>>, 30 June 2015.

¹⁸ Ch. Clapham et al., *African Game Changer? The Consequences of Somaliland's International (Non) Recognition*, The Brenthurst Foundation Discussion Paper 2011/05, at <http://www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org/Files/Brenthurst_Commissioned_Reports/BD-1105_Consequences-of-Somalilands-International-Recognition.pdf>, 30 June 2015.

¹⁹ "Turkey to Open a Consulate Office in Somaliland", Government of Somaliland, 2013, at <<http://somalilandgov.com/turkey-to-open-a-consulate-office-in-somaliland/>>, 30 June 2015.

²⁰ 'Somaliland Seeks Economic Ties with Ethiopia', Africa News Service, 10 November 2000, at <<http://www.mbali.info/newsfile1.htm>>, 30 June 2015.

²¹ B. R. Farley, 'Calling a State a State: Somaliland and International Recognition', *Emory International Law Review*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2010), p. 808; I. D. Jhazbhay, *Somaliland. An African Struggle for Nationhood and International Recognition*, Midrand 2009, p. 160.

²² 'Ethiopian Officials Visit Breakaway Somali Region', Agence France Presse, 21 April 2001, at <<http://www.mbali.info/newsfile1.htm>>, 30 June 2015.

be a good friend of Somaliland and have a very close relationship".²³ This suggests that Ethiopia is perceived by the political representation of Somaliland as a crucial partner in the region and that Somaliland is willing to maintain good relations with Ethiopia not only in order to gain an international recognition but also seeks to cooperate in the field of security, economy and foreign trade.

Ethiopia has signed several bilateral agreements with Somaliland, for example in 2006 they signed the agreement about the usage of the Berbera port on the Somaliland coast and other agreements referred to the provision of custom offices along the common border.²⁴ The Berbera port is after Djibouti the second most important export and import hub for the landlocked Ethiopia. Its importance for Ethiopia was reflected mainly due to the Ethiopian-Eritrean war, when it was no longer possible for Ethiopia to use the Eritrean port of Asmara. Imports from the port of Berbera are transported through the so-called "Berbera corridor" which passes via Tog Wajaale and continues to Ethiopia.²⁵ This corridor is perceived as a key route from landlocked Ethiopia to the Somaliland coast and therefore the project of building and repairing the road from Addis Ababa to Berbera was proposed already in 2000, when the Berbera port was offered to be fully used for Ethiopian export and import. However, this project proposal has not been accomplished and Somaliland government has not invested much in rebuilding of this corridor and therefore, it remains still under-utilized.²⁶ Nevertheless, the transit route between the Ethiopian Dire Dawa and Somaliland's Berbera port is the most important source of revenue for the Somaliland government.²⁷ In order to reduce its dependency on the Port of Djibouti, Ethiopia recently decided to develop links to the Mombasa Port in Kenya, Port Sudan and Berbera Port in Somaliland. During the November 2014 visit to Somaliland, Ethiopian delegation inspected port and fuel storage facilities in Berbera, since 5 to 10 percent of the Ethiopian imports are planned to come through this port.²⁸ Ethiopia is connected to Somaliland also by the air routes. Since the beginning of the new millennium, Ethiopian Airlines have offered direct regular scheduled flights from Addis Ababa to Hargeysa and Berbera in Somaliland.

Apart from the economy and foreign trade Ethiopia cooperates with Somaliland also in the field of general security and border security. Despite efforts to stabilize its territory, Somaliland became the target of several al-Shabaab terrorist attacks. For ex-

²³ 'Somaliland: Pact with Ethiopia to Enhance Economic Interdependence', Somaliland Sun, 17 November 2014, at <<http://somalilandsun.com/index.php/regional/6757-somaliland-pact-with-ethiopia-to-enhance-economic-interdependence>>, 9 July 2015.

²⁴ B. R. Farley, 'Calling a State a State...', p. 789.

²⁵ M. V. Hoehne, *Between Somaliland and Puntland. Marginalization, Militarization and Conflicting Political Visions*, London 2015, p. 18.

²⁶ M. A. Duale, S.M. Ahmed, 'Re-examining Somaliland's Relations...'

²⁷ S. Baldo, 'Somaliland: The Other Somalia with No War', The Nation (Nairobi), 30 June 2006, International Crisis Group, at <<http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/horn-of-africa/somalia/op-eds/somaliland-the-other-somalia-with-no-war.aspx>>, 30 June 2015.

²⁸ 'Somaliland: Ethiopia to Widen Choices over Ports', *Somaliland Press*, 29 June 2015, at <<http://www.somalilandpress.com/somalilandethiopia-to-widen-choices-over-ports/>>, 9 July 2015.

ample, al-Shabaab is responsible for the bombings in Somaliland's capital Hargeysa and Puntland's port Boosaaso in 2008, which were directed *inter alia* against the Ethiopian diplomatic mission, presidential palace and United Nations Development Programme mission in Hargeysa.²⁹ Besides terrorism, another security problem in the Horn of Africa in the first decade of the new millennium was piracy. In order to fight pirates effectively, Ethiopia and Somaliland concluded an agreement about the development of their security cooperation and creation of counterterrorism and anti-piracy mechanisms in October 2010.³⁰ In February 2015 in response to the ambush attempt of gunmen in the border region of Awdal, Somaliland and Ethiopia agreed to strengthen cooperation in the field of general security and border security. However, border security was discussed by the political representation of both states already in the previous era especially in connection to the efforts to prevent Islamist terrorist groups to penetrate territories of both Somaliland and Ethiopia.

As mentioned above, Somaliland established a broad spectrum of unofficial political and economic relations with Ethiopia. However, the Ethiopian government has a reserved attitude to the possibility of recognition of Somaliland with regard to efforts to preserve the territorial integrity of African states, but especially on a large Somali population within its own territory, in the Ogaden region. Like Kenya also Ethiopia fears that recognition of Somaliland could lead to renewed efforts of the irredentist Somali population in the region.³¹

REGIONAL POLITICS OF ETHIOPIA AND ITS LIMITS TO SOMALILAND'S RECOGNITION

Due to its important role within international organizations and its intended position of a regional hegemonist, Ethiopia is one of the crucial states in the case of Somaliland's recognition. The case of international recognition of Somaliland is to a great extent influenced by the interests of individual African states, especially regional powers and regional integrations. Regional organisations such as the Intergovernmental Agency for Development (IGAD) and the East African Community (EAC) play an important role in the East African politics. At the same time, the political orientation of these organizations is shaped by powerful countries in the region, e.g. Kenya and Ethiopia play an important role within the IGAD, and a policy of this organization to some extent follows the interests of these states. Ethiopia as a seat of the Commission of African Union and one of the key states in this organization has committed itself to the principle of territorial integrity and the maintenance of colonial borders enshrined in the found-

²⁹ 'Al Qaeda Blamed for Somali Bombing Wave', CNN, 29 October 2008, at <<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/WORLD/africa/10/29/somalia.blast/index.html?iref=24hours>>, 5 July 2015.

³⁰ T. Lansford (ed.), *Political Handbook of the World 2015*, New York 2015.

³¹ A. Huliaras, 'The Viability of Somaliland...', p. 170; F. Lortan, 'Rebuilding the Somali State', *African Security Review*, Vol. 9, No. 5-6 (2000), at <<http://www.issafrica.org/Pubs/ASR/9No5And6/Lortan.html>>, 30 June 2015.

ing document of the Organization. Therefore, it rather favours the *status quo* and is not much willing to articulate the issue of Somaliland's recognition in international fora.

However, it has engaged itself in the reconstitution of the Somali state since its collapse in 1991 and it has been trying to promote its own interest in the region. It has influenced the creation of transitional governments in Somalia and hosted four Somali national conferences, three of them in Addis Ababa between 1992 and 1993 and one in Sodere in 1997.³²

The main regional interest of Ethiopia has been in fact a fragmented and weak Somalia, thus *de facto* a confederation of autonomous territorial and political units, and therefore this state has not only supported Somaliland, but also has provided its assistance to Puntland under the leadership Cabdullaahi Yuusuf Axmed. Ethiopian regional policy has stood in opposition to the bloc formed by Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Djibouti which supported the creation of the Somali Transitional National Government, which emerged from a conference in Arta in Djibouti in 2002. In response to the creation of the Government, formed to a large extent by politicians with a dismissive attitude towards Ethiopian regime, Ethiopia decided to provide assistance to the coalition of southern Somali armed clan groups, grouped in the Council of Somali Reconciliation and Reconstruction (SRRC).³³ After the fall of the Somali Transitional National Government, Ethiopia engaged itself in Somali politics with its support for Somalia's Transitional Federal Government under the leadership of Cabdullaahi Yuusuf Axmed. This regime was to some extent a puppet regime of Ethiopia, which is also proven by the appointment Maxamed Geedi, known for his close relations with the Ethiopian regime, as the Prime Minister. Moreover, in 2006 Ethiopia supported the TFG militarily in its fight with the Islamic Courts Union (ICU).³⁴

Ethiopia along with Kenya, Uganda, Djibouti and other African states engages itself under the auspices of the African Union mission AMISOM in the peace operations in Somalia with the aim to push the Islamic militia al-Shabaab from the southern Somali region. Al-Shabaab is the real threat to the security of the whole Horn of Africa region, because it is able to plan and carry out terrorist attacks not only in Somalia, but also in neighbouring countries. This organization, which is to some extent affiliated to al-Qaeda is, for example, responsible for the attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi in September 2013 or Kenyan Garissa University in April 2015. In addition to that, Al-Shabaab has, according to the UN Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea, planned a terrorist attack in Addis Ababa in October 2013.³⁵ Therefore, it is in Ethiopia's interest to try to stabilize the security situation in southern Somalia and to take part in the AMISOM operations against al-Shabaab. However, Ethiopian troops are

³² K. Rudincová, 'Power and Powerlessness in Somalia: Ethiopian Involvement and the Transitional Federal Government' in H. Horáková, P. Nugent, P. Skalník (eds.), *Africa. Power and Powerlessness*, Berlin 2011, p. 58 (*Afrikanische Studien*).

³³ I.D. Jhazbhay, *Somaliland...*, p. 157.

³⁴ K. Rudincová, 'Power and Powerlessness...'

³⁵ UN, *Report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia and Eritrea pursuant to Security Council Resolution 2011 (2013)*, UN doc. S/2014/726, 19 September 2014, p. 20.

perceived as alien in Somalia due to the long history of mutual violence and rivalry between Christian kingdoms in Ethiopia and Muslim states in Somalia which took place since the medieval history.

The Ethiopian geopolitical interests in the Horn of Africa are affected by its continuing rivalry with Egypt, which opposes Somaliland's efforts of gaining independence and proposes a Somali unitary state which would serve as a counterweight to Ethiopia. However, at the same time, Ethiopia is not willing to antagonise Arab League states, due to their mutual economic ties.³⁶ Moreover, Somalia has served as an arena for proxy wars between Ethiopia and Eritrea. Since 1960s Ethiopia has supported various dissident groups in Somalia and then, since 2007 has focused on the securing its border with Somalia in the Ogaden region which is home to 4 million Somalis.³⁷ Eritrea has been accused of the sponsorship provided for Islamic military organizations such as al-Ittihad al-Islami in Somalia as well as Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in the Ethiopian Somali region.³⁸ In this context, another aim of Ethiopian foreign policy in the Horn of Africa also involves preventing penetration of the ONLF cells into the region and gaining power of Islamic organizations, which are perceived as enemies to Christian Ethiopia.³⁹ Somaliland, in return for good economic relations and cooperation with Ethiopia, is hostile not only to the ONLF but other insurgent groups operating within its region. There are Ethiopian claims that Eritrean-trained forces of ONLF were infiltrated via Djibouti to Somaliland which records the fact that in 2003 and 2010 ONLF fighters transiting Somaliland for Ethiopia were arrested.⁴⁰

Historical experience, geographic proximity and geopolitical interests limit the possibility of Ethiopia to internationally recognize Somaliland. For this reason, the Ethiopian Prime Minister Meles Zenawi declared that he expected Somaliland would be recognized first by the other states and in the meantime Ethiopia would support Somaliland in the informal way.⁴¹ According to David Shinn, the main cause of Ethiopia's reserved approach to the possibility of recognizing Somaliland is the fear of criticism from the Somali government that Ethiopia is trying to balkanise Somalia and weaken the Somali unity.⁴² On the other hand, Somaliland's political representation does not have an overly favourable negotiating position due to its economic weakness, and therefore has not been able to put the diplomatic pressure to Ethiopia in terms of the issue

³⁶ I. D. Jhazbhay, *Somaliland...*, p. 158.

³⁷ D. M. Anderson, J. McKnight, 'Kenya at War: Al-Shabaab and Its Enemies in Eastern Africa', *African Affairs*, Vol. 114, No. 454 (2014), p. 5, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/afraf/adu082>>.

³⁸ J. Abbink, 'Ethiopia-Eritrea: Proxy Wars and Prospects of Peace in the Horn of Africa', *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, Vol. 21, No. 3 (2003), pp. 407-425, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/0258900032000142446>>; T. Hagmann, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden. The Search for an End to Conflict in the Somali Regional State in Ethiopia*, London–Nairobi 2014.

³⁹ M. V. Hoehne, 'Mimesis and Mimicry in Dynamics of State and Identity Formation in Northern Somalia', *Africa*, Vol. 79, No. 2 (2009), pp. 273-274, at <<http://dx.doi.org/10.3366/E0001972009000710>>.

⁴⁰ T. Hagmann, *Talking Peace in the Ogaden...*, p. 55.

⁴¹ I.D. Jhazbhay, *Somaliland...*, p. 160.

⁴² D.H. Shinn, 'Somaliland: The Little Country That Could', *Africa Notes*, No. 9 (2002), p. 3.

of its international recognition. A consequence of this is that Ethiopia lacks of political willingness in recognizing Somaliland *de jure* and instead, it prefers to establish mainly economic relations and conclude *ad-hoc* agreements with this *de facto* state. Another type of criticism is directed at Somaliland's political representation due to its inability to propose a development programme which would attract direct Ethiopian investments in Somaliland.⁴³

This ambivalent approach of the Ethiopian policy towards the issue of Somaliland's international recognition may be well illustrated by the quotation of the Ethiopian Consul General in Somaliland Brigadier General Berhe Tesfaye: "*On the issue of the statehood of Somaliland, I and my government believe that such an internal issue should be dealt with by the direct stakeholders with homegrown peaceful means. [...] Meanwhile I believe that the people and government of Somaliland deserve broader international support and aid as they are contributing a lot in improving the peace and stability of this part of the volatile Horn of Africa.*"⁴⁴ The Consul General stressed in this interview that the Ethiopian government develops efforts to convince the international community of the need to provide financial assistance to Somaliland regardless of its position in the international system.

CONCLUSION

Since the declaration of its independence, Somaliland has been trying to develop good relations with Ethiopia. However, the possibilities of Ethiopia to support the international recognition of Somaliland are limited mainly due to its position as a hegemonist within the Horn of Africa region. Therefore, the main emphasis of the Ethiopian policy towards Somaliland has been placed on the development of economic relations without recognition. Therefore, it correlates with the third possibility of an approach of the international community towards *de facto* states defined by Scott Pegg.⁴⁵ Ethiopia maintains good relations with Somaliland mainly because of its need to use the Berbera port for its imports and exports. Another reason is the Ethiopian need to secure its neighbourhood, since the borders in the Horn of Africa are permeable. Therefore, by cooperation in the field of security Ethiopia is able to prevent the infiltration of Islamic groups as well as other insurgent groups such as ONLF into its territory.

Ethiopia, due to its intended position as a regional hegemon, has to balance its policy in the Horn of Africa. On the one hand, it has engaged itself in the internal affairs in Somalia by its support of the Somali peace process and especially by the backing of the Somali Transitional Federal Government. However, on the other hand, it has

⁴³ M.A. Duale, S.M. Ahmed, 'Re-examining Somaliland's Relations...'

⁴⁴ 'Somaliland: Ethiopia Set for New Heights in Cooperation', *Somaliland Sun*, 21 December 2014, at <<http://www.somalilandsun.com/index.php/regional/6947-somaliland-ethiopia-set-for-new-cooperation-heights>>, 9 July 2015.

⁴⁵ S. Pegg, *De Facto States...*

maintained good, although almost entirely economic, relations with Somaliland. Due to its position within international organizations such as the African Union and its continuing commitment to the principle of territorial integrity of African states, it is unlikely, that Ethiopia would be the first state to recognize Somaliland *de jure*. The scenario, in which Ethiopia will deepen its economic cooperation and cooperation in the field of security with this *de facto* state which is beneficial for both parties is far more likely. Nevertheless, by developing good relations, mutual visits of Ethiopian and Somaliland political representation and the promotion of the Somaliland case on international fora, Ethiopia could to some extent serve as a patron state for Somaliland which could possibly lead to the acceptance of Somaliland into the international community of states in the future.

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